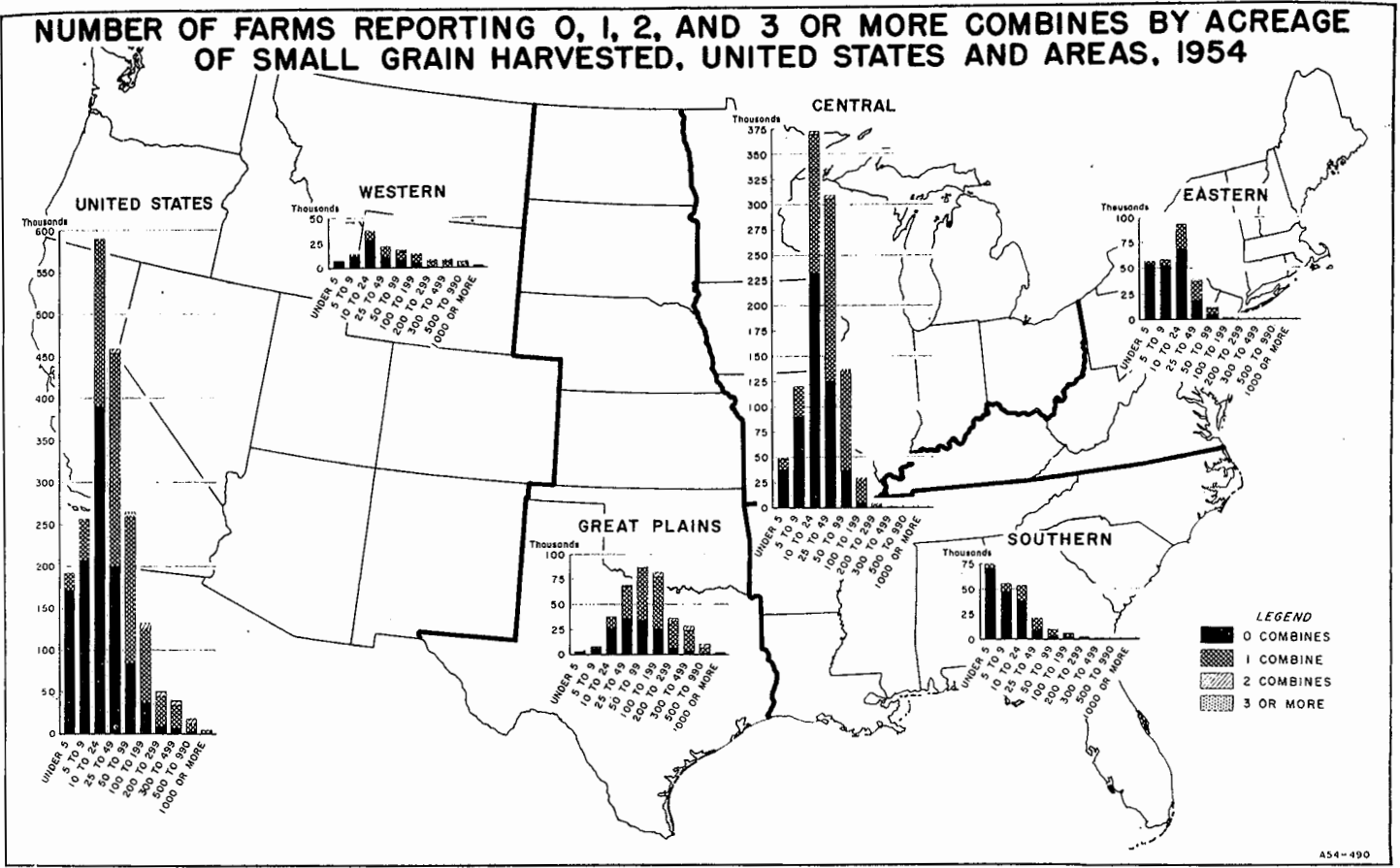


NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING 0, 1, 2, AND 3 OR MORE COMBINES BY ACREAGE OF SMALL GRAIN HARVESTED, UNITED STATES AND AREAS, 1954



About one-fifth of all farms in the United States reported having one or more combines in 1954. Because of the wide range in size of combines most farmers can buy a size suitable for the work to be done. Few farmers own more than 1 combine. Many of those reporting more than 1 combine were farms having at least 100 acres of small grain, and were located in the Great Plains area.

Estimates made by the United States Department of Agriculture show that grain combines were used to harvest almost 63 percent of the total small grain acreage of 1945, 84 percent of the acreage of 1950, and more than 90 percent of the small grain acreage harvested in 1954. Farmers have bought substantially more combines since World War II. Much of the increase was east of the Great Plains area where many of the combines are of the small sizes, and acreage per combine is less than in the specialized wheat areas. These changes resulted in an average decrease in acres of all small grain per combine from 297 acres in 1945 to 112 acres in 1954.

CORN PICKERS

Early settlers arriving in the New World soon discovered that for a long time corn had been an important food of the Indians. Since then, corn production has spread into most countries of the world, but so well adapted to its production are our soils and climate that our farmers alone produce about 60 percent of the world crop. Our corn acreage has grown with the growth of the

Nation—from 34 million acres in 1866 to a peak of 117 million acres in 1917. Now, about 1 in 4 acres of land planted to crops is in corn.

Although the first patents for a field-type corn picker were issued around 1850, it was not until 1910 that pickers on farms reached the 1,000 mark, according to estimates by the United States Department of Agriculture. Ten years later the number had increased to 10,000. All of the early corn pickers were one-row traction-operated machines. Use of pickers made little headway until about 1928, when the tractor power take-off was first adapted for use with them. Two-row pickers came into use about the same time. With these improvements, farmer's use of the corn picker began to increase. By November 1954, corn pickers were reported by 684,000 farmers.

Corn harvest was a long, tiresome job before the mechanical picker came into general use. Estimates of the United States Department of Agriculture show that in 1913, 40 percent of the corn acreage for grain was cut, shocked, and husked, much of it by hand, and nearly all of the remaining 60 percent was harvested by hand from the standing stalk. In recent years, little of the corn acreage is cut, shocked, and husked, and probably as much as three-fourths of the acreage is harvested with mechanical pickers. The mechanical harvester has reduced the time required to harvest and crib an acre of corn in the Corn Belt from about 8 hours when harvested from standing stalk by hand to less than 3 hours when harvested with mechanical picker.